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ABSTRACT

Effective procedures and techniques for using a textbook along with a philosophy of textbook use in k-12 schools are given in this second issue. The social studies textbook is described as a tool to be used in conjunction with other supplementary instructional materials, such as audio-visual materials, reference books, periodicals, and lectures. Before study begins, teachers are encouraged to have students examine the textbook to thoroughly acquaint them with its organization and, moreover, prepare them with lifelong skills in the use of books applicable to all materials. Considerable focus is upon the functions of the textbook: to provide course organization, to supply basic content, and to furnish common learning materials. Other suggestions are given on textbook selection, adaptation of textbooks to the abilities of the readers and how to use the textbook to teach the techniques of intensive reading. Related documents are SO 005 979 through SO 006 000. (SJM)

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How To Use a Textbook

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Textbooks Should Be Selected with Care

Because of its prominent place in the instructional program of most social studies classes, the textbook should be chosen carefully. The use of a check list will help to insure that attention is given to such features as the quality of binding, paper, and print; the adequacy and suitability of illustrations and instructional aids; and the inclusion of recent data and interpretations. However, no check list can be made into an adequate rating scale from which satisfactory indices for comparing textbooks may be derived. More important than the criteria for selection previously listed are the suitability of the content and organization of the book to the course which it is to serve, the accuracy and teachability of the material it contains, and the degree to which it fits the approach to instruction which is held by the teacher who will use it. Decisions on these matters can be arrived at only through long periods of painstaking analysis and comparison of the textbooks available from publishers.

The teacher who is responsible for the selection of a new textbook should analyze those parts of the books under consideration which deal with areas of knowledge concerning which he is himself well informed. Because of the broad scope of the social studies and the varying specialized study in which teachers engage, every competent teacher is probably more of an "authority" on some aspects of the subject treated in the textbook than are the authors. On these aspects the teacher can make mature decisions about the accuracy, fullness, and impartiality of the treatment. No book which fails to pass muster in such an analysis is suitable for adoption, no matter how high a standard it may set in terms of physical and organizational features. After he has convinced himself of the adequacy of the book with regard to aspects of the subject with which he is most familiar, the teacher will want to investigate the treatment of those aspects about which he knows least. His purpose in doing this will be to discover whether the coverage is sufficient to make up for his own inadequacy.

The social studies, by their very nature, deal with matters of controversy. For this reason, in the selection of textbooks special attention must be given to the balance and objectivity with which ideas are presented. While black-listing and censorship by non-school agencies should be opposed, wise discretion must be exercised in the adoption of materials of instruction, and the school system must be prepared to answer charges of bias against such materials. Teachers and school officials will receive much benefit in their consideration of this and related matters from two official statements of the National Council for the Social Studies.[1]

The Textbook Is a Tool

When the industrial arts teacher issues planes for smoothing lumber, he does not merely hand them to the students and assume that they will know how to use them. On the contrary, he devotes a special session of the class to their use. He explains that using the tool correctly is an art which must be studied and practiced if the woodworker is to turn out worthy products. He describes the plane and its uses. Holding one before the class, he disassembles it, names each of the parts, and tells its purpose. He asks the class to name the parts and describe their functions. Similarly, he assembles the plane while the students observe. At a workbench he demonstrates the use of the plane and shows how to hold it and how to adjust it for different types of work. To help fix the information and identify individuals needing special help,

[1] "The Treatment of Controversial Issues in the Classroom." *Social Education* 15: 232-36; May 1951. "Freedom to Learn and Freedom to Teach." *Social Education* 17: 217-19; May 1953.

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he gives written tests. He watches the class at work, corrects individual errors, and retells and demonstrates when necessary. Throughout the year he continues to insist upon proper use of the plane. He knows that without both the introductory lesson and consistent attention to individual work, time and material would be wasted, skills would not be learned, bad habits would become fixed, and the products of the school shop would be unsatisfactory.

In the social studies classroom the textbook is no less a tool for the achievement of the teacher's and students' purposes than is the plane in the shop. The textbook, to be sure, serves different functions and is used in a different manner. Its use does not involve the physical danger or require the manipulation demanded by the plane. The use of the textbook cannot be demonstrated or observed as readily as that of the plane, nor is there so tangible a product to serve as an index of the skill of the learners.

On the other hand, the textbook is a very important tool in the social studies. The financial outlay for textbooks in the average classroom is considerable, and efficient use of a social studies textbook is probably at least as difficult an art as planing a board. Yet few social studies teachers devote as much time to careful introduction of the textbook and to systematic observation and correction of its use as do industrial arts teachers to similar processes involved in the use of a plane. Perhaps these important matters are overlooked because the teacher assumes that students understand the mechanics of reading and, having used textbooks in previous classes, already know enough about them. Such assumptions are largely unwarranted. The teacher who investigates will find that many students are deficient in their ability to read and know little about how to use a book.

If the textbook is to serve as an essential tool for the pupils as well as the teacher, it is of great importance that the teacher help the pupils develop the necessary skill in its use and appreciation of its value. As the woodwork teacher instructs in the use of planes, so must the social studies teacher instruct in the use of textbooks. It is probable that too many students are left to discover the values and techniques of textbooks for themselves and therefore never learn them properly. As with other complex skills, one cannot master in a few days the full skill of using a textbook, but continues to improve for years through study and practice. Nevertheless, the teacher who devotes several days at the very beginning of every course to preparing his students in the use of textbooks will find himself richly rewarded.

The Textbook Involves the Use of Skills

Among the skills which can be developed with a textbook are those which exploit the organization of a book so as to use it wisely. Several of these skills can be taught best when all students have identical tools, that is, copies of the same textbook. Most authors of textbooks devote some attention to this matter through study aids in the textbooks themselves, workbooks, and teachers' guides. But, at best, these devices are superficial. The teacher, himself, can well afford to devote enough class time to these skills to insure that they are really learned. If the activities suggested here are conducted properly, with reference to their applicability to all books, the students should become more efficient in the use of books in the classroom, in the library, and at home.

Of course the needs of the students vary according to grade level and earlier experience. In the elementary grades the introduction to the textbook should be simpler than that outlined in the next few paragraphs. In the high school, if students already possess considerable facility in textbook use, the introductory study should emphasize only those rudimentary skills in which deficiencies exist, and effort should be concentrated on more advanced procedures.

On the first day students and teacher together, each with his own copy, should carefully examine the textbook. The logical place to start is with the cover. Here the student should become aware of the incompleteness of the information given. Only the last name of the author appears, and, whether it is the case with a particular text or not, it will be true of many books that the printer's title is abbreviated. Because of these abbreviations a reference to Adam's *American History* or Smith's *Economics* is not adequate, for the same author often writes several books, and several authors of the same name often write in the same field.

This discussion naturally leads to the title page, where the complete title can be found. Because the full title of a school textbook often is given on the cover, the teacher should exhibit other books that make the contrast striking. Henry Johnson's *Teaching of History* and Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* are good examples. The title page provides the full name of the author, and often tells his position and gives titles of some of his other works. The question may be raised and answered as to where further information about the author can be obtained. The title page of a book is the source of important information other than the title and author. The relative significance of reprint, revision, and first copyright dates

should be explained. If there is a date on the title page, it usually tells merely when the book was last printed. Sometimes it indicates the year of the latest revision. While a date of revision is more significant than a date of reprinting, neither should be accepted without comparing it with the first copyright date given on the back of the title page. The student should learn to recognize that when the date on a title page is 1965 and the copyright date is 1915, the book represents the viewpoint and state of knowledge of the author in 1915. If more than one copyright date is given, careful study will be needed to determine whether the revision was substantial or superficial. The reader should understand that the place, as well as the time, of writing may indicate the attitude of the author. Sometimes this can be deduced from the place of publication, which is shown on the title page. Thus, one would expect to find a very different account of the American Revolution in a book published in London from that in a book published in Boston. Often it will be desirable to know the home of the author, which is seldom shown on the title page. Thus one textbook in American history, written by a New England author, failed to mention the Hartford Convention, while another, written from a Southern point of view, gave a more than usually sympathetic treatment to the plantation system of the Old South. The name of the publisher may indicate the trend of the content. While this is not usually true in the case of textbooks, the introductory discussion may well be used to teach that some publishers are noted for the liberal, and others for the conservative, viewpoint of their books.

The function of a preface in explaining a book's nature and purpose and in acknowledging assistance should be discussed in relation to the particular preface in the text. In this connection, individual acknowledgments may well be discussed with attention to the variety of assistance which the author acknowledges. It may be well to expand the discussion somewhat to give a deeper understanding of the difficult and complex task of writing a textbook.

The adequacy of the table of contents as an outline showing the organization and content of the book should receive attention. By way of a brief overview of the course it is well to go over the table with the class, examine the principal headings and the amount of space devoted to each and perhaps suggest areas in which the course will vary somewhat from the textbook organization.

Such lists of maps, pictures, and charts as are found in the book should be examined and their utility discussed. Specific drills on the uses of these lists are very helpful in explaining and fixing their value. It is well at this point to emphasize and explain by example that maps, charts, tables, and pictures are not merely embellishments but are integral parts of the book which help the student understand the accompanying textual materials. Questions may be asked or problems presented which require information to be derived from certain maps, charts, or illustrations. These problems will develop a need for further information and may lead to those devices found at the back of the book. Such tables as those of presidents, area and population, river lengths, and mountain heights may be discussed in the same manner. Questions and problems, each requiring the use of more than one of these aids, may be put to the class.

When adequate, the index is a very important part of any book because it enables the reader who is searching for particular information to save a great deal of time. Wesley suggests a useful technique for testing the adequacy of the index in a textbook and at the same time bringing its importance home to students. Have each member of the class open his book at random, locate the first proper name on the page, and check to see whether that name is given in the index. Most of these names should be listed there. If they are not, students should realize that the index is not satisfactory. When using this textbook for obtaining specific information, they will turn first to the index, but if they do not find the desired item there, they will supplement the index by appropriate reading techniques.

Should the book contain a glossary, special attention should be given to its nature and use. It is well to point out that many ordinary words have specialized meanings in various of the social sciences and that the glossary will often explain these meanings more clearly and specifically than the dictionary does. In addition, there are many special terms which, for various reasons, do not appear in abridged dictionaries but may be found in the glossary. Examples should be given, and drill on the use of the glossary may reveal individual difficulties which need to be cleared up.

Many social studies textbooks include appendices. Here information is listed or tabulated for ready reference. Often the appendix of a textbook is the most convenient place to find such data as the states, their capitals, and dates of admission; the presidents and their terms of office; important land and water bodies, together with their areas; countries and their populations; names of rivers and their lengths; and significant dates in history. Often, appendices include important source material: for instance the Constitution, the Declaration of Independence, price indices, or case studies. Students ask about

these and appreciate an explanation of their nature and usefulness. Probably it is well not to spend very much time on them while introducing the textbook, although the teacher may utilize them at this time to explain the nature and importance of source material and to suggest other sources that will be used in the course. It should be added here that the teacher who fails to utilize the documents in the appendix when teaching the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution is omitting an important element from the education of his students.

Turning to the special aids to learning usually appearing at the ends of chapters or sections, the teacher emphasizes their usefulness as study helps and discussion guides. He may explain a little simple philosophy of study in showing the difference between specific fact questions and thought questions. Always these discussions should be clarified by examples and should be conducted with the optimum amount of pupil participation. This will vary depending on the relative knowledge and experience of both students and teacher. The time spent in discussing the various activities suggested for students should be in proportion to the teacher's intent to use them.

While the students are considering the aids for study at the end of chapters their attention will be drawn to the list of reading materials. These are probably the least useful of all the aids provided in the textbook. This is true because no libraries except large public libraries contain even a fair proportion of the books listed in a typical textbook. These lists are usually not even a satisfactory basis for building a school library collection, for there is little relationship between the lists of reading materials in parallel textbooks. Therefore, if a library collection is based on the suggestions in one book, the collection will almost certainly not contain the books listed in the next textbook adopted. Some teachers find it worthwhile to underline in the desk copy of a textbook the titles of those books which are in the school library and to underline in color those which are in the nearest public library. In any case, while introducing the textbook it is proper to describe briefly the various types of reading which will be included in the course. Comment on the resources of the school and public library is in order, although early in the year the class should be instructed with care in the use of the library. As was mentioned earlier, the teacher should emphasize that progress in learning to use the library will be enhanced by the introductory study of the textbook.

After the various aids at the end of the division have been studied, the class is ready to turn to the reading material itself. Here also aids to study should be pointed out. In general, unit or chapter titles indicate the central thought of the division, although a few writers have chosen these titles with so much desire to give color as to leave them little meaning. Many texts have subdivision and paragraph headings. The value of these headings for preview and review should be demonstrated. Many textbooks begin units and sections with overviews, and close divisions with summaries. The student should be instructed to read these overviews critically, mentally raising questions which he hopes the ensuing paragraphs will answer. Some textbooks include preliminary questions. In this case their purpose and value should be explained. Emphasis should be placed upon the nature of summaries and their use for review purposes both during the first reading and when trying to synthesize the materials from several chapters.

Teaching Skills Is a Continuing Process

Both during the course of the introductory study and at its conclusion the teacher should by oral and written questioning and the posing of problems satisfy himself that the desired skills are actually learned. He also realizes that, like other abilities, these skills do not stay with the learner unless regularly utilized. There is little purpose in devoting so much time to the study of a text unless the skills referred to above are to be put to regular use.

Throughout the year, therefore, the teacher will check in many ways to see that students are making effective use of the information derived from the preliminary study. In making assignments he will question as to study procedure; in class discussions he will pursue the matter further from time to time; during periods of study he will move about the room, working with individual students to help them clear up problems of textbook use and to apply many of the techniques of the textbook to other reading; at intervals he will test to ascertain which techniques are being used by which students and will give special attention to those who need it.

Functions of the Textbook

As a classroom tool the textbook serves three principal functions: to provide organization for the course, to supply basic content, and to furnish common materials for learning. The organization is necessary and welcome to most teachers. To the alert teacher, however, it is not a limiting feature. Using the text only as a framework, he will expand portions or insert whole units in areas where he is particularly competent, where the local community can be utilized most effectively, where students

express unusual interest, or where library materials are richest. Over a period of time, of course, it is to be hoped he will build up the library to meet his needs.

Most teachers use a single book as a text, but some prefer to use several textbooks, believing that in this way the student is exposed to different viewpoints and emphases. There is some question as to whether more is not lost than gained by the latter practice. The similarities among textbooks are more important than the differences. This is necessarily so because competing books are intended to serve the same purposes for the same readers. It is little wonder that the student who is required to reread the same account several times, whether in one textbook or many, soon learns to hate history. The teacher who assumes that his students have read three different accounts of an event because they have read its description in three different textbooks is often wrong. The principal differences are usually in the amount of detail which is introduced. For example, there is almost no agreement as to the names of persons entitled to be mentioned. It is true, however, that textbook accounts sometimes vary, as in the instances previously cited of the Hartford Convention and the plantation system. Differences occasionally exist in such important matters as the description of the nature of the American Revolution or the reasons for the entry of the United States into a war. But assignments should be given in parallel textbooks only when the accounts are known to differ, or, occasionally, for the purpose of comparison. To make such activities possible, it is wise to have a few parallel textbooks in the classroom library. However, the usual procedure after reading one textbook account should be to make optimum use of the library. This involves the use principally of materials other than textbooks—of accounts by historians, biography, travel, sources, historical and contemporary fiction, and periodical literature. Among the things which cannot be taught through textbooks are a love for varied reading and the habit of reading history. Another argument against the multiple-textbook method is that, to a considerable extent, it defeats the organization purpose of the textbook. Also, because of the extreme variation in such details as the names of relatively unimportant persons, which are easily used in inferior testing techniques, the basic content purpose of the textbook is liable to perversion. The social studies library should contain parallel textbooks, but they should constitute a minor part of it. Economy of both school funds and student time, as well as the necessity for teaching good reading habits, requires the maximum use of non-textbook, normal reading material.

The function of the textbook in providing a core of content is particularly susceptible to abuse. Unfortunately there are classes in which the textbook not only provides a core of content but constitutes almost the entire course. In these classes the principal activities consist of studying the textbook and reciting its contents. Making these practices the sole basis for teaching was condemned by writers on social studies methods in America more than a century ago and in the light of present knowledge of the principles of learning is far more to be deplored now than it was then. The good teacher will not regularly assign certain pages and require pat answers. Assignments will be carefully planned and made in meaningful terms, and the reading in the textbook will be only a part, although usually the central part, of the total assignment. Class discussion will be a more or less informal procedure, widely varied in nature. Questions from the teacher will not be confined to specific details, although these will be deliberately used when necessary. Other questions will probe the depths of meaning and understanding and will stimulate further research.

Although teacher's questioning is necessary to stimulate, guide, and evaluate learning, a large proportion of the questions should be asked by the pupils, and often the questions of most value will be neither those asked by or of the teacher, but those which pupils ask of each other. Many times they will be more interested in answering each other's questions than those of the teacher. Their questions will particularly aid the teacher in evaluating his own work. The teacher who encourages his pupils to question will frequently find that a matter which he had supposed to be thoroughly understood requires further attention. Questions which seem "foolish" should not be ridiculed but should be utilized for the purpose of clearing up misunderstandings. Pupil questioning will result in amplification of certain points and classification of others. The teacher should encourage pupils to contribute information from other sources and should not hesitate to explain certain points or to introduce additional materials whenever needed. He will firmly discountenance incomplete or slovenly preparation on the part of the class.

The textbook values most commonly thought of are those related to its organization and basic content functions. It is also of great worth in the teaching of certain skills in reading and studying. This phase of textbook use is worthy of more attention than it ordinarily receives. Here again the utility of a single textbook method rather than a multiple-textbook method is apparent, for nearly all the skills learned with the aid of a textbook are most

easily taught when all the students have identical materials with which to work.

Adapting Textbooks to the Abilities of the Readers

A problem which most teachers have to meet is caused by the fact that the range of reading ability at any grade level is so great that the textbook chosen for the grade proves too difficult for the slow readers. Those students, therefore, not only do not understand what they read but are bored by it. Not achieving any of the objectives of the course, they soon lose interest and sometimes become disciplinary problems. They should be provided with textbooks suited to their reading ability. In most subjects there are some textbooks which are easier to read than others. Many teachers have found help for the slow readers by using textbooks intended for an earlier grade level. This practice is easiest in American history, where the middle grades, junior high school, and senior high school cycles are firmly established, with many textbooks available for each cycle. It can be carried out in other subjects also. There are several cycles of geography books. Civics books can be used in problems of democracy, and "Old World Backgrounds" books are suitable for the early parts of world history. It should go without saying that the teacher will seek to employ a different textbook of the lower cycle from that which is currently used in the same school. The student should not suffer from the direct comparison of his textbook with those of pupils in the lower grades. Often, a slow reader who has grasped the meaning of simple accounts will be able to read with understanding the textbook written for his own grade.

Just as the adopted textbook may be too difficult for slow readers, it may be too simple for superior readers. For them, rapid reading of the adopted textbook may be followed by more careful reading of the same account in a textbook written for a higher grade level. Here, again, the teacher should be careful not to assign reading in the same textbook that is used in higher grades in his school system. For superior readers, it is especially important that when they have exploited the adopted textbook they should be directed to extensive reading in non-textbook material. To require that they read and reread textbook accounts written below their reading level, and to drill them on those accounts, will defeat some of the principal purposes of teaching social studies.

It is entirely possible to make much provision for individual differences in reading ability even though the same text material is being used by all members of the class. The teacher who will make use of approaches to study which result in varying degrees of difficulty, who is willing to prepare graded study guides, and who will develop the techniques of paired or team study will find study of the textbook increasingly rewarding to his students. Durrell has provided careful explanations, explicit instructions, and specific examples based on an elementary school textbook in social studies.[2] Chase gives a useful, similar, but less explicit description.[3]

Reading As a Crucial Skill

Recent studies seem to indicate that reading ability is closely related to the type of material read. The implication is that teachers should teach reading skills needed in the social studies in connection with social studies material.

Research which points to the value of extensive reading suggests that the teacher should use many opportunities to encourage the wide use of varied reading material. Here the textbook references are of limited value. In connection with problems raised while reading the text, the students are taken to the library and instructed in its use.

The teacher should also bring to class and explain the nature and use of many sorts of material—periodical literature, pamphlets, suitable fiction, biography, travel accounts, various secondary works, and source materials. Frequently these can be introduced best to expand or to explain passages in the textbook. The efficiency with which these references are used will be greater if the class has learned to use the textbook properly.

The textbook itself should be used to teach the techniques of intensive reading. Here, as at almost every step in teaching, it is of prime importance that the teacher demonstrate proper procedure. Very early in the year, probably while introducing the text, he should set aside a class period for a demonstration of how to read a textbook. Having previously chosen a few pages and carefully read them with this intention in mind, he should, after explaining his purpose to the class, proceed to study their content aloud. The class should not interrupt the demonstration but should be encouraged to discuss it afterward.

The teacher should go through verbally the mental processes involved in intensive study. He therefore anticipates the central thought of sections and paragraphs from

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[2] Durrell, Donald D., *Improving Reading Instruction*, New York: World Book Company, 1956. p. 285-308.

[3] Chase, W. Linwood, "Individual Differences in Classroom Learning" in Nelson B. Henry, Editor, *Social Studies in the Elementary School*, Fifty-Sixth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part II. Chicago: Distributed by the University of Chicago Press, 1957. p. 174-82.

headings or topic sentences, asks himself questions, pauses to identify proper names, disputes the author's view and then concedes the point or resolves to look it up later; he rewords phrases to improve them or make them his own, interprets details in terms of his own experience or previous reading, and questions the use of a complex term or guesses at its meaning and derives it from context. He relates the material he is reading to the larger area under consideration and to contemporary events. Upon reading the name of an unfamiliar place he locates it, either on a wall map or by reference to known places. At the end of the reading he summarizes the content, fits it into the unit, and comments on its significance to modern living. He may turn to the end of the chapter and identify such terms and answer such questions from the text as relate to the passage studied.

Thus far the demonstration has been carried on by the teacher, oblivious of the class as though he were actually studying aloud by himself. Now it is proper to invite questions and comments from the students.

In retrospect it should be emphasized that casual reading is not suitable to intensive study, that such study requires mental activity of a high order, and that self-testing is essential to understanding and retention. It is well at this time to indicate that reading methods vary with the kind of material and the purpose of the reader. At other times the teacher will demonstrate other methods, such as reading for the principal ideas, for obtaining specific information, or for enjoyment.

Outlining, summarizing, and abstracting can best be taught in connection with the use of the textbook, for all pupils will have it before them, and it is more likely to be arranged in logical order than are other materials. Here again the good teacher demonstrates the processes before requiring students to perform them. These demonstrations can best be performed at the blackboard as cooperative projects by class and teacher working together. The teacher, however, should have selected the passages to be used and should have worked out the product carefully in advance. While the demonstrations should be flexible and students should participate freely in constructing the outline, summary, or abstract, it is the teacher's clear duty to see that an acceptable finished product emerges from the exercise.

Although a healthy respect for scholarship should be encouraged, students should learn that all writers are fallible and that errors creep into the best of works. Sometimes they should compare accounts given by different texts or those given by the text and those of the encyclopedia or other secondary works. They should be initiated into the mysteries of source study and occasionally should perform such routines as checking textbook statistics against census reports, or textbook accounts against documents. Perhaps a genuine error will be found, in which case the student making the discovery should be praised. The author of the book will appreciate hearing of the mistake, and composing a letter to him will prove to be an unusually stimulating class project.

The Textbook Is One Implement of the Course of Study

Many other techniques in the use of a textbook will occur to the alert, experienced teacher. Enough has been said, however, to indicate a philosophy of textbook use and to suggest a few effective procedures. It is unfortunate that educators have not devoted more thought and research to improving the use of textbooks. It is probably as a result of their neglect of the matter that publishers have produced more and fuller guides to the use of their particular textbooks in recent years. Professional writing on textbooks has been made up largely of three kinds: that which denounces textbooks, that which defends them, and that dealing with textbook selection. The teacher who desires guidance in the *use* of textbooks must turn to those books themselves and to the guides prepared especially to accompany them rather than to professional periodicals.

During the past few decades it has been customary in certain circles to condemn any teaching procedure which involves the use of a textbook. The textbook has been said to restrict the teacher and confine the pupil, to formalize the organization and stultify the procedure, to narrow the viewpoint and deaden the interest, to instill an awe of the printed word, and to freeze the content of the curriculum.

Faulty teaching is often blamed on the textbook without examining other possible causes. Likely causes include: (1) those traceable to the want of suitable teaching materials, for example an inadequate library, lack of proper classroom references, or need for such teaching aids as motion pictures, records, maps, and specimens; (2) those resulting from such deficiencies on the part of the teacher himself as lack of competence in the social sciences, insufficient training in educational method, imperfect understanding of children and the principles of learning, or meager experience.

Textbook critics are of three principal classes: those who ignore the advances which have been made during the past generation in selecting, grading, and organizing textbook content; ultra-progressives, who do not believe

in a fixed curriculum because they think there are no facts or ideas of enduring value; and those who seem to believe that the typical overburdened American teacher can, in a comparatively short time, dash off a course of study and round up materials which will provide a better basis for instruction than a textbook does. Both the textbook and course of study are needed and they should be used to supplement each other.

Textbook authors in general have been responsive to suggestions for improvement. In fact, they have often been their own most effective critics. The modern textbook is a vast improvement over the prototype which many critics have in mind. The typical textbook is attractive in binding, print, style, and wealth of illustrative material; it is learnable, reflecting comparatively up-to-date information with regard to choice of vocabulary, sentence structure, and pupil interest and information; it is accurate, demonstrating scholarship and insight; it is well organized both logically and psychologically in accord with the best principles now known; it is broad in scope, emphasizing personal, social, and economic, as well as political, aspects of society; it is bigger than earlier texts and therefore fuller in its treatment; and it contains more and better teaching aids than ever before.

This discussion of the textbook has described it as a tool, one of the many used by the teacher and the students. The careful craftsman knows that one tool cannot be successfully substituted for another, for he knows that each has its unique function. Properly understood, therefore, the textbook is used in conjunction with many other tools: the course of study, the motion picture, television, radio and other audio aids, globes, maps, wall charts, periodicals, reference books, supplementary reading books, notebooks, discussions, forums, panels, lectures, and dramatizations.

Often textbooks are cooperative products reflecting the best in scholarship and education. A list of the authors of current social studies textbooks would be a veritable *Who's Who* of historians, political scientists, sociologists, economists, geographers and specialists in the social studies. Probably most teachers will choose to continue using texts. Without them the typical teacher would find himself severely handicapped and the competent teacher would promptly become a textbook author.

The textbook is probably the best single tool available to social studies teachers. The fact that it may be misused is not a criticism of the tool but of the training or ability of the craftsman. In the case of the textbook, as in the case of the plane in the school shop, the skill with which the tool is used has much to do with the quality of the product.

NOTE: This *How To Do It* notebook series, designed for a loose-leaf binder, provides a practical and useful source of classroom techniques for social studies teachers. Elementary and secondary teachers alike will find them helpful. The titles now available in this series are: *How To Use a Motion Picture, How To Use a Textbook, How To Use Local History, How To Use a Bulletin Board, How To Use Daily Newspapers, How To Use Group Discussion, How To Use Recordings, How To Use Oral Reports, How To Locate Useful Government Publications, How To Conduct a Field Trip, How To Utilize Community Resources, How To Handle Controversial Issues, How To Introduce Maps and Globes, How To Use Multiple Books, How To Plan for Student Teaching, How To Study a Class, How To Use Sociodrama, How To Work with the Academically Talented in the Social Studies,* and *How to Develop Time and Chronological Concepts.*

Jack W. Miller of the George Peabody College for Teachers is editor of this series. Dr. Miller welcomes comments about the items now in print and suggestions for new titles.